

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are currently pending in this application. By way of this Reply, claims 1, 3-5, 8, 10, 14, 17, 20, 21, and 22 have been amended to further clarify the claimed invention, and claims 2 and 9 have been cancelled, without prejudice. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been introduced into the application by these amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102(b)

Claims 1-7, 14, 15, 17, and 20-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2001/0043113 (Hoshino et al.). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons set forth in detail below.

Independent claim 1 of the present invention, as amended, recites a driving apparatus including, in pertinent part, “a memory which stores characteristic information of the plurality of loads.” Independent claims 14, 17, and 20-22 recite substantially the same feature. Because Hoshino does not teach or suggest a “memory” as recited in independent claims 1, 14, 17, and 20-22, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims of the present invention are distinguishable from Hoshino.

In addition, Hoshino does not teach or suggest a “switching section” as recited in independent claims 1, 14, 17, and 20-22. Independent claims 1, 14, and 17 of the present invention recite that the driving apparatus “drives while sequentially

switching a plurality of loads in time series” and includes “a switching section configured to select and switch the load driven by the load driving section, the load being selected from the plurality of loads.” Thus, when one of the loads are ON, the other is OFF. Independent claims 20-22 recite substantially the same feature. In Hoshino, the loads (15a and 15b in Fig. 5) do not switch so as to light up in sequence. Hoshino teaches that the two loads are either ON or OFF simultaneously. Furthermore, it is readily understood by one of ordinary skill in the art that it is not possible to select only one of the two LEDs and drive based on the circuit disclosed in FIG. 5 of Hoshino.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that Hoshino et al. does not teach or suggest “a switching section” or “switching means” as recited in independent claims 1, 14, 17, and 20-22. Claims 2-7 and 15 are dependent upon claims 1 or 14, and are believed to be allowable over Hoshino et al. for the same reasons provided above. Based on the foregoing, withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of claims 1-7, 14, 15, and 20-22 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103(a)

Dependent claims 8-13 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hoshino et al. in view of U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/0142047 (Inoue et al.). Dependent claims 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hoshino et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,129,437 (Koga et al.).

Claims 8-13, 16, 18, and 19 are dependent upon claims 1, 14 or 17. Because independent claims 1, 14, and 17 are believed to be allowable over the primary reference, Hoshino et al., for the reasons provided above, dependent claims 8-13, 16, 18, and 19 should be allowed over the cited prior art for the same reasons. Based on the foregoing, withdrawal of the obviousness rejections of claims 8-13, 16, 18, and 19 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephone interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 1, 3-8 and 10-22, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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